

This is the statement of: James [REDACTED] Darnell, Jr. Age: [REDACTED]  
DOB: [REDACTED] Sex: M Race: W Social Security #: [REDACTED]  
Home Address: [REDACTED] Home Telephone: [REDACTED]  
Education: 2 yrs college Occupation: U.S. Army  
Employed by: [REDACTED] Address:  
Work Telephone: [REDACTED]

Next of kin/emergency: [REDACTED]  
Telephone: #Same

Address: Same Employed by:

Business Address: Work Telephone:

This statement is being taken at the Homicide Office, 201 Poplar, Room 11-21 on February 13, 1997 at 1:17 P.M.  
Statement made to: Sgt. R.F. Wilkinson 9243 & Sgt. J. Botting 0456

Typed by: E.C. Flowers, 2777

This statement is relative to the Kidnapping of RICCI LYNN ELLSWORTH, F/W 45, which occurred at BETWEEN FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1997, AT 11:00 P.M., on SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1997, AT APPROXIMATELY 3:30 A.M. AT THE MEMPHIS INN, 6050 MACON COVE, and which is filed under MPD File # 970202356.

Q: Where are you currently assigned with the U.S. Army?

A: I am in transit to Schofield Barracks, Hawaii from Fort Bragg, NC.

Q: On Saturday, February 8, 1997, did you have an occasion to go to the Memphis Inn Motel, 6050 Macon Cove?

A: Yes, between 1:30 and 2:30 in the morning (Saturday morning).

Q: How are you judging the time?

A: From when the movie, Jerry McGuire let out on Winchester, the time it took me to drive from there to Collierville, then out to Macon Cove.

Q: Was anyone with you when you went to the Memphis Inn?

A: Yes, Dixie Roberts.

Q: What type of vehicle were you driving?

A: 1989 Ford Tarus, SHO maroon 4-door.

Q: Describe in detail what occurred after arriving at the Memphis Inn?

A: I got out of my car, I noticed a man to my left behind a car with a trunk open, several parking spaces away. I walked towards the night clerk lobby. He followed me, I opened the door, invited him in first, I followed him into the lobby. I then walked towards the clerk's window. At that point, I realized that both the clerk and the man that I followed in the hotel, their knuckles were bleeding.

The clerk then proceeded to put money under the window towards the other man. The other man was talking to the clerk. He seemed inebriated. The door to the main lobby was open, and I turned around and walked out. Got in my car, and told Dixie, "Something was wrong inside, and we should go somewhere else." And I left the parking lot.

Q: What type of money or currency was the man on the inside handing through the window?  
A: Both coins and dollar bills.

Q: What made you turn and leave after deciding something was wrong?  
A: Because both men were bleeding, the door to the night clerk's office was open. The man was drunk, and just intuition, I guess.

Q: About how long were you inside the motel?  
A: Not more than 5 minutes.

Q: While in the motel, did you at any time ever see a female?  
A: No.

Q: While in the motel, did you ever see any blood other than on the male's hands?  
A: No.

Q: Describe the male/white that you followed into the motel?  
A: M/W, mid-20's, 5'6", 150 lbs., mustache, neck-length, light red hair, freckles on his left forearm, orange and white baseball cap, white t-shirt with torn left sleeve, blue jeans, tennis shoes I believe, wristwatch on the left arm. *had some* *T. J. [unclear]*

Q: Were both of this male's hands bleeding or just one? *of both in the front. T. J. [unclear]*  
A: Right, is what I saw.

Q: Could you tell how bad of injury this male had to his hand?  
A: It looked as though he would need stitches.

Q: Describe the male that you referred to as the clerk?  
A: White/male, mid-30's, 5'7", 160 lbs., collar length brown hair, thin mustache, dark blue jacket, I'd say black collared shirt under the jacket (jacket was buttoned all the way up to the second button), he was bleeding from the knuckles on his left hand, kind of pale skin tone.

Q: Can you identify these two (2) males if shown a picture?  
A: I got a very good look at the clerk from the front. The other individual in the lobby, from the side.

Q: Can you describe the car that had the trunk open the male came from?

A: Between my car and his car, I believe it was a mini-van type vehicle. I can describe the rear portion of the car as gray, 4-door, compact, Honda-civic type sedan, 4-door.

Q: What kind of lighting was in the parking lot?  
A: The only thing that was lit was the light from under the eaves of the building.

Q: What would you consider the lighting conditions?  
A: I'd say good, I was able to see what color hair he had.

- Q: How close to the night entrance did you park?  
A: Three (3) spaces to the left as you face the building.
- Q: Did the female companion, Dixie Roberts, go in with you in the motel?  
A: No, she stayed in the car.
- Q: Did you notice any other persons in the parking lot or in the lobby of the motel?  
A: No.
- Q: Were the two (2) males still in the motel when you left?  
A: Yes.
- Q: How did you learn of this kidnapping incident?  
A: At first, I casually heard about it on television. Then a friend of mine brought it to my attention through a newspaper article.
- Q: When did you first learn of the kidnapping?  
A: Wednesday morning, 12th of February.
- Q: After learning of the kidnapping, did you contact Sgt. Shemwell of the Homicide Bureau?  
A: After ascertaining that I was in that motel at the probable time of the crime, I called Sgt. Shemwell Wednesday night, about 10:30.
- Q: Is there anything else you care to add to this statement that will aid us in our investigation?  
A: No.
- Q: Can you read and write without the aid of eyeglasses?  
A: Yes.

  
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JAMES M. DARNELL, JR.

13 FEB 97 1997  
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DATE/TIME